

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2323

S E C R E T PRETORIA 5068

NODIS - CHEROKEE

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: SMITH STIFFENS HIS POSITION

1. ON MONDAY MORNING AUG 28 THE REGIME SERVED "D NOTICES" ON THE PRESS AND MEDIA PROHIBITING MENTION OF THE NAME PATRIOTIC FRONT, ITS CONSTITUENT PARTIES, AND OF THEIR LEADERS, OR THEIR ACTIVITIES. PERMISSION TO HOLD ZAPU RALLIES HAD BEEN DENIED ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS SINCE THE END OF JULY.

2. IN THE MEANTIME THERE HAS BEEN OTHER EVIDENCE OF A HARDENING OF THE REGIME S POSITION IN SUPPORT OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. THE BRITISH REPORT THAT BOTHA AND FOURIE FOUND THE ATTITUDE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WITH WHOM THEY MET ON AUG 24 TO BE UNREAL. SMITH AND HIS AFRICAN COLLEAGUES REPORTED THINGS ARE GOING WELL: THE CEASEFIRE WILL SOON SUCCEED AND ELECTIONS CAN BE HELD: THERE IS NO POINT OF GOING TO AN ALL PARTIES MEETING WHICH CAN ONLY FAIL OR SHOW THEM UP FOR HAVING SIGNED A SWEETHEART AGREEMENT. MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE HAVE BOTH MADE WELL PUBLICISED SPEECHES CRITICISING THE ALL PARTIES MEETING AND DESCRIBING THE DISADVANTAGE OF IT.

3. ZAPU VICE PRESIDENT CHINAMANO, WITH WHOM GRAHAM AND I LUNCHE

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ON MONDAY, SAYS THAT THERE IS A THEORY BEING VOICED IN ZAPU CIRCLES THAT SMITH HAS BEEN ENCOURAGED BY WHAT HE BELIEVES TO BE A WELLING UP OF SYMPATHY IN THE UK AND US TO BELIEVE THAT HE ONLY NEEDS TO GO TO A MEETING TO CONVINCE THE WORLD OF HIS REASONABLENESS. THEN WHEN IT FAILS THE UK AND US WILL RECOGNISE AND SUPPORT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. HE CAN HOLD HIS ELECTION EVEN THOUGH THERE IS A LOW TURNOUT AND THE ELECTED GOVERNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED

INTERNATIONALLY. UNDER THIS REASONING SMITH IS MERELY REINFORCING HIS HAND BEFORE THE MEETING SO HE CAN GO TO IT FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH. CHINAMANO SAYS THE NEW CENSORSHIP WILL CERTAINLY BE TAKEN BY NKOMO AND MUGABE AS AN UNFRIENDLY ACT. THEY WILL KNOW THAT SMITH IS NOT APPROACHING THE MEETING WITH AN INTENTION TO MAKE SERIOUS COMPROMISES TO THEM BUT THEY WILL NOT REFUSE TO GO TO A MEETING BECAUSE OF IT. IN THE MEANTIME ZAPU (INTERNAL) PUBLICITY SECRETARY WILLIE MUZARURWA, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT AT LUNCH, WILL HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE TUESDAY TO TELL THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS ABOUT THE IMPOSITION OF CENSORSHIP.

4. WE KNOW THAT SMITH HAS BEEN ENCOURAGED BY WHAT HE BELIEVES TO BE A SHIFT OF OPINION IN THE UK AND US. HE TOLD A RECENT VISITOR HE BELIEVED THE SENATE RESOLUTIONS WERE EVIDENCE OF GROWING SYMPATHY IN THE US FOR THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND THAT THIS TOGETHER WITH A FAVOURABLE VOTE WHICH CAN BE EXPECTED IN THE BRITISH HOUSE OF LORDS WOULD RESULT IN LIFTING SANCTIONS.

5. JOHN GRAHAM HAS HYPOTHESISED THAT SMITH MAY HAVE GOT WIND OF MUGABE'S FOOT DRAGGING ON PF UNITY. (GAYLARD HAS BEEN SCEPTICAL THAT NKOMO CAN HANDLE MUGABE SINCE GENEVA, WHEN HE CLAIMS MUGABE DOMINATED NKOMO.) IN REPORTING TO MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE (AND PERHAPS SOME RHODESIAN FRONT COLLEAGUES) ABOUT HIS MEETING WITH NKOMO AND PROPOSED FOLLOW-UP WITH BOTH PF LEADERS HE MAY HAVE RECEIVED A STRONGLY NEGATIVE REACTION AS THEY REFUSED TO BE SACRIFICED. THIS MAY HAVE CAUSED SMITH TO PULL BACK ON THE WHOLE

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EFFORT TO WORK SOMETHING OUT WITH NKOMO AND MUGABE AND THEN GO TO AN ALL PARTIES MEETING.

6. IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION FOR THE RECENT STIFFENING OF POSITION. GRAHAM AND I WILL BE SEEING A NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. IF IT APPEARS THAT THERE MAY BE A STEPPING BACK FROM AN ALL PARTIES MEETING, WE WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER WHAT PRESSURES WE CAN BRING. ONE MAY BE AN APPEAL TO THE SOUTH AFRICANS. ANOTHER LESS DRAMATIC ONE WHICH IS WORTH CONSIDERING IS THAT GRAHAM AND I ABSENT OURSELVES FROM SALISBURY FOR A LITTLE WHILE. SMITH IS CLEARLY STILL PREOCCUPIED WITH WHITE REACTIONS. WE BELIEVE THAT A GREAT DEAL OF HOPE IS BEING PINNED ON AN ALL PARTIES MEETING AS THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IS INCREASINGLY BEING WRITTEN OFF BY BLACK AND WHITE ALIKE. IF THE HIGH LEVEL OF EXPECTATION THAT IT WILL TAKE PLACE BUILT BY THE REGIME ITSELF AND REINFORCED BY OUR PRESENCE (MENTIONED FREQUENTLY IN THE PRESS) IS DISAPPOINTED, WE BELIEVE THERE WILL BE A WHITE REACTION. THE EXODUS OF WHITES WHICH IS GROWING WILL QUICKLY REFLECT THIS. TO STEM IT SMITH EITHER HAS TO GO TO A MEETING OR BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE A DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT THROUGH ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION AND SUCCESS OF THE CEASEFIRE. IN EITHER CASE IT WILL HAVE TO BE A

PUBLIC ACTION AND TAKEN SOON.

7. DEPARTMENT PLEASE REPEAT TO LUSAKA, DAR, MAPUTO.
EDMONDSON

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NNN

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